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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - PM ABE'S VISIT TO US - TOKYO

LEAD STORIES: Wednesday morning's conservative Sankei front-paged the Bush-Abe meeting Friday evening (Japan time) at Camp David, during which the two leaders are likely to agree that the international community should aim to cut emissions of CO2 and other greenhouse gases in half by 2050.

1. "PM Abe's Visit to US: Confirm Strong US-Japan Cooperation" The liberal Mainichi editorialized (4/25): "Prime Minister Abe will leave for the US Thursday for talks Friday with President Bush. This will be his first visit to the US since he became prime minister last September. While in Washington, Abe is also expected to meet with Senate and House leaders. Although he will stay for only two days, it will be a good opportunity for him to build a relationship of trust with President Bush. We hope that the prime minister and the president will have an in-depth discussion regarding North Korea and relations with China, as well as the US-Japan alliance.... It is rather unusual for a Japanese prime minister to put off visiting the US until seven months after assuming office. This does not, however, mean that a Japanese premier should visit the US immediately after inauguration, and Abe himself said that the days of a new Japanese leader immediately doing so to show deference are over. Nevertheless, Abe should take seriously the cracks in the current US-Japan relationship, as he has yet to establish the close personal bonds with President Bush that former PM Koizumi enjoyed.... We want Bush and Abe to coordinate policy on North Korea. While the Bush administration has shifted to a flexible stance by ending its financial sanctions on North Korea, the Abe administration prioritizes the abduction issue and continues to maintain a hard-line stance.... Although Tokyo and Washington agree on the goal of getting

Pyongyang to abandon its nuclear ambitions, their differences over specific measures have been quite noticeable."

DONOVAN